

Session No. 18

Course Title: Social Dimensions of Disaster, 2nd edition

Session 18: Mid-Term Examination

1 hr.

Objectives:

18.1 Understand the procedures and expectations related to the mid-term examination (take home essay)

18.2 Complete the oral and written assignment for the disaster case study analysis.

Scope:

Details are summarized regarding the mid-term examination and the disaster case study analysis assignment.

Readings:

Student Reading:

Book selected for disaster case study analysis.

Professor Readings:

1. Course syllabus (material specifying disaster case study analysis; see Session No. 1; “Course Orientation”).
2. Mid-term examination (Student Handout 18-1 appended).

Background References:

None.

General Requirements:

Student Handout (18-1 through 18-3 appended).

Copy of course syllabus (see Session No. 1; “Course Orientation”).

See individual requirements for specific requirements.

Objective 18.1 Understand the procedures and expectations related to the mid-term examination (take home essay).

Requirements:

Copy of Course Syllabus (see Session No 1; “Course Orientation”).

Student handouts 18-1 through 18-3.

Remarks:

- I. Examination instructions.
 - A. It is recommended that instructions similar to this be included on the examination.
 - B. **Instructions:** Select two of the six topics presented below. Write an essay for each. Limit each essay to the equivalent of six typed pages (double spaced). Each essay will be evaluated independently and weighted equally (14 points). Include a separate page of references cited. Sign your name at the end of each essay to indicate that it is **your** work. Due (date) in class. (Allow one week).
 - C. **Distribute** Student Handout 18-1; “Mid-Term Examination.”
 1. Write an essay entitled: “Disasters Are Social Problems.” In your essay summarize benchmarks in the history of disaster research and explain why it is useful to view disasters as a type of social problem. Include in your analysis discussion of the disaster life cycle, terrorism, and looting behavior. Explain why emergency managers should understand the interdependence among other social problems such as crime, poverty, and failing public education systems.
 2. Write an essay entitled: “From Terrorism to Tornadoes: The Building Blocks of Community Preparedness,.” In your essay identify and illustrate the four phases in the life cycle of a disaster. Explain how these define the four functions that comprise All-Hazards Emergency Management. Select one of the functions and discuss three broad strategies that are relevant. Select one of these strategies and briefly describe two specific tactics relevant to terrorism preparedness and two that are relevant to tornado preparedness. Cite relevant research and include illustrations pertaining to specific terrorism attacks and tornado events where appropriate.

3. Write an essay entitled: “Fundamentals of Disaster Warning Systems.” In your essay explain the concept of “constraint” through discussion of social factors like warning message characteristics and receiver characteristics. Include answers to these questions: What are the most common warning and confirmation sources? What are “special populations”? Why must emergency managers recognize community diversity? What seven functions must be accomplished if a warning system is to be effective?
4. Write an essay entitled: “What Every Emergency Manager Must Know About Disaster Mythology.” In your essay identify and illustrate five myths about disaster responses. Summarize relevant social research. Explain why knowledge of these myths is relevant to emergency managers.
5. Write an essay entitled: “Human Response to Disaster: Lessons For Emergency Managers.” Organize your essay, following an introduction, around five key lessons. Include among your lessons research findings relevant to both victim and non-victim behavior. Explain the concepts of “convergence behavior” and “therapeutic communities” somewhere in your essay.
6. Write an essay entitled: “Building Theoretical Models: A Perspective on Research For Emergency Managers.” In your essay explain and illustrate the concept of a theoretical model, the steps in the construction of a theoretical model and three types of data collection techniques. What are four common weaknesses in disaster research studies and why should emergency managers be aware of these?

D. Request student questions.

1. **Allow time** for students to read examination.
2. **Answer** questions posed.

II. Evaluation criteria.

A. It is recommended that a specific list of evaluation criteria be listed.

B. Explain:

1. Essays are evaluated on an overall basis.
2. Separate ratings are **not** made on each criterion, but the following are used.

C. **Distribute** Student Handout 18-2; “Evaluation Criteria” and review each point listed.

1. **Depth:** Are issues introduced and dropped, or are they developed and analyzed?
2. **Organization:** Is there evidence of logical thought and consistent internal structure, or is a “shotgun” approach used.
3. **Originality:** Are there new ideas and efforts to rearrange old ones, or is the material just regurgitation?
4. **Style:** Are sentences and paragraphs used to present ideas in a straightforward manner, or does excessive verbiage hide the ideas?
5. **Mechanics:** Does the work reflect a sense of pride by being neat, and unmarred by spelling and punctuation errors?

Supplemental Considerations:

Students may ask a variety of questions about the **content** of the examination questions. Professors may wish to refer them to **specific course sessions** and/or specific reading selections. Some students may ask questions about **format**, e.g., “can we include quotations from some of the readings?” While professorial discretion is required, **experience indicates** that limited guidance may be required. For example, “Sure you may quote, but be sure you limit any single selection to one or two sentences. I want to read your writing, not Kreps, Fischer, or Hooper.” Refer students to the **Course Syllabus regarding the various types of student evaluations and their relative weights**, e.g., mid-term examination counts for 28 percent of the total grade.

Objective 18.2 Complete the oral and written assignment for the disaster case study analysis.

Requirements:

Copy of the Course Syllabus.

Student sign-up sheet for case study selection.

Remarks:

- I. Case study analysis (written).
 - A. Selection of case study.

1. It is recommended that the professor require approval of the case study before student initiates work.
2. **Case study log.**
 - a. It is recommended that the professor maintain a “case study log” so that as each book is approved for student use, it is recorded.
 - b. This procedure prevents duplication and reminds students of the assignment.
 - c. Last minute selections can be minimized if a due date for case study selection is announced and reinforced.
3. **Note:** While disaster novels and media accounts are worthy enterprises, it is recommended that professors require that case study authors be social scientists.

B. Case study analysis report (written).

1. **Review** guidelines listed in Course Syllabus; see Session No. 1; “Course Orientation.”
2. **Remind** students of **due date** and **late paper policy** (see Course Syllabus).

II. Case study analysis (oral report).

A. **Assign dates** for oral summary of case study to be presented in class.

B. **Structure expectations** for oral report.

1. **Note taking device.**

- a. To be distributed by each presenter prior to presentation.
- b. Distributed to all students.
- c. Format:
 - 1) ½ page of 8 ½ X 11 sheet of paper.
 - 2) Specify name of presenter.

- 3) Specify book citation, i.e., author, publication date, title, place of publication, and publisher.
 - d. Explain that this will facilitate note taking by students during each presentation.
 - e. Information presented may be used in mid-term examination, the Field Trip Reaction Reports, or Final Examination.
2. **Length:** 8-10 minutes.
3. **Distribute** Student Handout 18-3; “Oral Summary of Case Study: Required Topics.” Review points briefly.
- a. Book citation (listed on note taking device to be distributed to class at outset of presentation).
 - b. What did you learn about the authors?
 - c. Brief summary of event and locale.
 - d. Description of research methods used.
 - e. Given the methods used, what cautions are in order regarding acceptance of the findings and conclusions?
 - f. Select the most significant conclusion or finding that was confirmed in the Drabek inventory and summarize it.
 - g. Describe the most significant inconsistency you discovered between this case study and the conclusions included in the Drabek inventory.
 - h. What new research studies did this case study suggest to you?
 - i. What aspects of this case study are most relevant to emergency managers?
4. Encourage use of handouts, Power Point materials, etc.

III. Rationale.

- A. It is recommended that the professor conclude the session with a **statement of rationale**.

B. **Remind** students of the **course objectives** discussed in Session No. 1; “Course Orientation,” e.g., increase student capacity in written and oral communication skills.

C. **Examination feedback.**

1. Assigned grade.
2. Written comments by professor.
3. Individual review of written comments with professor.
4. Review of “Best Examination.”
 - a. It is recommended that student **permission be obtained** so that the examination receiving the highest grade can be reviewed by all students desiring to do so.
 - b. Review of examination **content** and professor comments should be encouraged.

Course Developer References:

None.